

REMARKS

Claims 3 and 6 - 11 are in the application.

As a result of the foregoing amendment, the subject matter of claims 4 and 5 has been included in claim 3. Claims 1, 2, 4 and 5 have been cancelled.

With respect to the specification, the Examiner will note that the required abstract has been provided on a separate sheet. Also, the Examiner will note that the application has been provided with appropriate headings.

The references to Figures 3 and 4 have been deleted.

Also, reference numerals 9 and 10 have been removed from the drawing. In Fig. 1, reference numeral 8 has been changed to 18 and reference numeral 16 has been changed to 17a in Fig 1A. The Examiner is respectfully requested to make the attached replacement sheets of the drawing of record.

Claims 1 and 2 have been cancelled. Accordingly, the rejection of claims 1 and 2 under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) has been rendered moot.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of the remaining claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mukaigawa et al.

Applicants respectfully submit that the reference relied on by the Examiner does not disclose or suggest the present invention as claimed.

In the reference to Mukaigawa et al, the lower work roll 53 is coupled directly to the pusher 54. This is clearly illustrated in Figs 1, 3A, 6A, 12, 13, and 16.


In accordance with the present invention as claimed, on the other hand, the actuator 7 is coupled to a pusher 16. This pusher 16, in turn, has two connections in the form of arms 17a and 17b, wherein the arms are coupled to the upper work roll 2A and the lower work roll 2B. This configuration, which is not disclosed by the reference to Mukaigawa et al, has the advantage that each work roll is coupled to the pusher, so that a relative displacement between the upper and lower work rolls is prevented.

Applicants respectfully submit that the claims as amended are clearly patentably distinct over the reference relied on by the Examiner in rejecting the claims.

Therefore, in view of the foregoing, it is submitted that this application is now in condition for allowance and such allowance is respectfully solicited.

Any additional fees or charges required at this time in connection with the application may be charged to Patent and Trademark Office Deposit Account No. 11-1835.

Respectfully submitted,

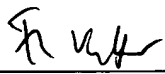


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MAILING CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks, PO Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on June 22, 2006.

By:  Date: June 22, 2006
Friedrich Kueffner